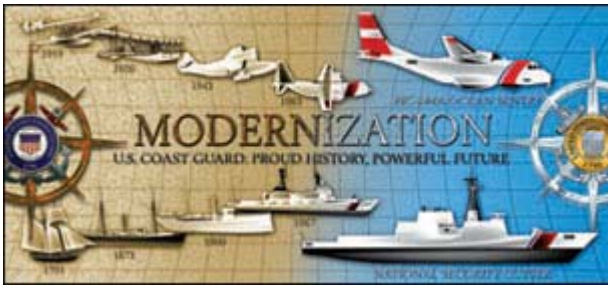


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*Fifth District*  
**U.S. Coast Guard**



**U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security  
United States  
Coast Guard**



# Press Release

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Contact: (757) 398-6274

## **Portsmouth, Va., based Coast Guardsman wins American Legion Spirit of Service Award**

PORTSMOUTH, Va. - A crew member assigned to the 270-foot Coast Guard Cutter Forward, homeported here, was recently named the 2008 recipient of the American Legion Spirit of Service Award, which recognizes one member from each military service for their contributions as a volunteer.

The award recipient is Petty Officer 2nd Class Jim Abels, 28, a native of Harrisburg, Pa.

Abels has volunteered numerous, off-duty hours working with national and state parks, historical sites, museums and veteran functions throughout the United States. Abels spends approximately 180-days per year at sea in his job with the Coast Guard.

"It is a great honor to represent the Coast Guard," said Abels. "I believe it is important to know the Coast Guard's roots and where this service has come from."

In addition, Abels is co-founder of the



**Petty Officer 2nd Class Jim Abels, 28, a boatswain's mate assigned to the 270-foot Coast Guard Cutter Forward, homeported in Portsmouth, Va., is shown here. Abels, a native of Harrisburg, Pa., is the 2008 recipient of the American Legion Spirit of Service**

Bluejackets, a World War II maritime living-history group who focus on the wartime efforts of the Coast Guard and Navy.

**Award, given annually to one member from each military service for contributions in volunteer efforts. (U.S. Coast Guard photo/Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher Evanson)**

Abels will be officially honored during this year's American Legion Annual Nation Convention scheduled Aug. 24-30 in Phoenix.

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